

Heritage Linguistics and Language Activism: A Conversation with the Siraya

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we reveal some of the problems we have encountered in the last few years while attempting to revitalize the Siraya language on the one hand and fighting for official recognition of the people on the other. As our group consists of a linguist, a community leader, and a musician, two of whom Siraya natives and the last a member through marriage, our discussion is particularly relevant to two of the original ideas introduced in ICLDC in 2009, namely, *heritage linguistics* (Crippen, 2009) and *language activism* (Florey et al., 2009). Crucially, it corresponds to the actual work that realizes the two ideas through ingenious endeavor (e.g., Leonard, 2008, 2009). In the paper we first celebrate the collective achievements of our community in recent years through recounting them: the publication of a series of storybooks with audio CDs and native illustrations; the producing of new songs in Siraya and using them in language teaching; a short-lived but much appreciated mother tongue program in local schools; a government-sponsored linguistic seminar; and the beginning of a teacher-training program. Then we address the difficulties that have confronted us over the years, including those of linguistic nature and those of political nature. In fact, they are all related: when we sit together studying our heritage language, we often find ourselves planning, organizing, and strategizing our next street protest or court appearance. In addition, we acknowledge that some of these difficulties indeed come from our personal lives, but we also encourage our audience to consider these “personal issues” as probably, unavoidably, social. For example, perhaps many of our personal problems are in reality related to our persons, i.e., our being indigenous persons without an official status in our own country, and a main reason why the government has refused our people an official status is because it considers our language extinct, and thus our culture and race extinct as well. It hence all comes full circle: the personal is social, the social is personal, and the linguistic problems are always truly inseparable from those cultural and sociopolitical. All in all, it is our most sincere hope that, by carrying out Bourdieu’s (1990) call for a “reflexive practice” of social science and through honest conversations, our audience and we can together envision a new breed of indigenous activism that is both theoretically ideal and practically possible, one that which fits the heritage linguist and the non-heritage alike.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. The Siraya People and Language

The Siraya are an indigenous people of Taiwan/Formosa, who have resided in Southern Taiwan (including today’s Tainan, Kaohsiung, and Pingtung) for thousands of years. There is also a modern Siraya community in Hualien on Taiwan’s east coast, whose ancestors migrated there in the 19th Century. Currently, there is no official statistics of the Siraya population, as its people have not yet been granted an official indigenous status by the central government of Republic of China (Taiwan), mainly on the ground that “evidence that indicates a unique Siraya language and culture does not exist”⁴. An unofficial survey, however, estimates the population to be around 60,000. Many of the modern-day Siraya people know for a fact that, despite the common perception (cf. the government’s account) that the Siraya have all been Hanized or

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⁴ The Siraya people, however, have received official indigenous status from the local government of Tainan City since 2005.

assimilated into the Han majority, they still possess a unique heritage that they consider their own: The Siraya have their own cultural practices, their own look, and their own beliefs. The Siraya must also have had influences on the Han majority, as the more accurate description of the effects in any contact situation must be mutual.

The first written accounts of Siraya were collected in the 17th century by the members of the Dutch East India Company. They document the social organizations, societal roles, customs, and activities of the Siraya people at the time. These accounts have been re-published in Taiwan in modern Dutch, accompanied by English translations (Blussé et al. 1999; Blussé & Everts 2000, 2006). In 1661, the Dutch missionary Daniel Gravius and his colleagues translated The Gospel of St. Matthew into the Sinkan dialect of Siraya, which has been re-published by Campbell (1996 [1888]). While this version of St. Matthew's had been published mainly for missionary purposes, it has now become the main basis of Siraya language revitalization. Two other Siraya texts by Dutch authors that have been used for studying Siraya linguistics include the (Heidelberg) Catechism, which was also published by Gravius, and the Utrecht Manuscript, a 35-page Dutch-Siraya wordlist by an anonymous author. While the Catechism follows the same Siraya dialect as in St. Matthew's, the Utrecht Manuscript documents a different dialect.

In addition to the Dutch accounts, there exist some other written records of the Siraya written by Chinese Han authors from the Qing Dynasty (1683-1895). They documented continuous changes of the Siraya practices from the 17th Century. These documents also contain some descriptions of the Siraya language spoken at the time. However, they are of little use for language revitalization and/or modern linguistics because of the non-phonetic nature of Chinese writing system. Many linguists now cite an Ethnologue account, asserting that the Siraya language was last spoken in 1908 and has since then went on "extinction." This must be a misinterpretation, for the original statement in Ethnologue in fact points out that "[the Siraya language] was still spoken in 1908 and some are still semi-speakers⁵." Moreover, during our fieldwork in the summer of 2007, the co-authors of this paper actually met a 70-year-old Siraya man, Mr. Pan Wan-jin, in Dongli Village, Hualien, who still remembered quite a number of Siraya words. In other words, there are still "rememberers" of the Siraya language today⁶.

The above-mentioned historical accounts document three major Siraya dialect groups – Siraya, Tavuan, Makatau, and six major Siraya tribes/villages – Soulang, Mattau, Sinckan, Bacloan, Tavokan, and Tevorang. While the dialectal differences can no longer be observed today as the language itself is sleeping/dormant, most of the villages have remained vibrant. In addition, migrant Siraya settlements outside of the six historical locations have been found. Many of the present-day Siraya villages have a cultural organization of its own. For example, in today's Sinhua (traditionally Tavokan), there is a Tainan Pepo Siraya Culture Association, in today's Kali (traditionally Soulang), there is a Pakthaiunn Culture Association, and in today's Kapasua (a migrant branch of Soulang), there is a Kapasua Cultural Workshop, just to name a few. These local organizations are NGOs led by native activists who are engaged in the maintenance and continual practice of various aspects of local cultural activities. They are also members of a loosely defined Siraya Ally that would organize political actions, mainly to demand official recognition of the Siraya people by the government. The Siraya Ally further works together with other Pepo groups, or lowland indigenous peoples in Taiwan, that do not have an official status, on the political front. The sense of togetherness, or the comradeship engendered by

⁵http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=fos

⁶ Huang has encountered linguistic researchers who discredited these Siraya rememberers, saying that "they don't remember anything; what they speak is not Siraya." Huang surmises that this observation must have resulted from the said researchers' own limited ability to decipher language change. The words elicited from the rememberers naturally would not match the written Siraya texts to which these researchers so pedantically follow. There are hundreds of years between the two varieties of Siraya in question.

the collective political efforts, has naturally led to these Pepo peoples attending, or supporting, one another's cultural activities as well.

Last but not least, the modern Siraya groups can be divided into two main categories in terms of their chosen activities of cultural revitalization, which in turn are related to their respective religious traditions. The first group consists of the Christian Siraya whose main effort is language reclamation, and the second group consists of the followers a native Siraya religion that worships the indigenous deity Alid⁷. As mentioned, currently the most reliable sources for any kind of linguistic study of Siraya are biblical. Hence, to maintain their cultural uniqueness, the Christian Siraya have to rely on their Bible being a Siraya Bible. The followers of indigenous Alid, on the other hand, do not claim ownership of any written Siraya text. In fact, they mainly use Taiwanese Southern Min in their religious ceremonies, along with some lyrical chanting performed by the priests that may have preserved Siraya linguistic features but is currently undecipherable. Still, they have for generations maintained their own unique religious practice, which is observably different from the dominant Han Taoist religion, the Buddhist religion, and the Christian religion. In other words, for this latter group, keeping the religion alive is equivalent to keeping the Siraya identity. Note that the attitude towards religion in Taiwan is quite open in comparison with other countries. Taiwanese people generally believe that there is no good or bad religion and that all religions help people stay positive in life. Also, no single religious group in Taiwan is dominant enough to affect governmental policy-making. This explains why the different Siraya groups can often work together and put in collective efforts. For example, Tainan Pepo Siraya Culture Association (TPSCA), the main leader of language reclamation that was formed in a Christian Siraya village, has always welcomed anyone who wants to study the language. There have been quite a few non-Christian Siraya participants in the language classes hosted by TPSCA. In fact, Author 1 of this paper comes from a family that follows the indigenous Alid religion, but he has found no problem joining Author 2 and Author 3, both Christian, in TPSCA and studying the Christian Siraya texts.

1.2. Tainan Pepo Siraya Culture Association

In 1999, representatives from several townships in Tainan County gathered in Khaupi Church and founded Tainan Pepo Siraya Culture Association to revitalize and promote Siraya culture. Mr. Ban Cheng-hiong was elected as the chair. Currently, Uma Talavan, daughter of Mr. Ban, serves as the chair.

Throughout the years, TPSCA has established itself as one of the leading activist groups in Siraya Movement as well as in Pepo (Low-land Indigenous) Movement. Below is a list of achievements and efforts by TPSCA. They are roughly organized along the “linguistic” line and the “sociopolitical” line, although the distinction is not always clear as language-related issues are often, if not always, political.

TPSCA's achievements and efforts

Year	Linguistic	Sociopolitical
1997		“Another window to Pepo” (平埔的另一扇窗), a musical, was performed by the Siraya members of Khaupi Church in Sinhua, Tainan. The performance combine traditional dance and some lyrics in Siraya.
1999		TPSCA was founded.

⁷ The Christian Siraya also use the Siraya word “Alid” for the Christian God. Therefore, the phrase “indigenous Alid” is used here to make a distinction.

2001		With the Siraya Ally and other Pepo peoples, TPSCA went to Taipei to hold a press conference in front of the Legislature Yuan demanding official recognition of Pepo indigenes.
2002	Under the leadership of Uma Talavan and Edgar Macapili, TPSCA started the “Siraya Language Revitalization” plan.	(1) TPSCA founded a music performance group called <i>Onini</i> , which means “sounds” in Siraya. (2) TPSCA joined other Pepo groups in another press conference demanding recognition.
2005		Tainan County Government officially announced Siraya as an indigenous people of the county.
2007	TPSCA hosted the first annual <i>MusuhapaSiraya Language and Culture Summer Camp</i> .	
2008	(1) 2 nd Musuhapa Summer Camp (2) TPSCA published a Siraya-English-Chinese trilingual dictionary <i>SirayaGlossory</i> (Macapili 2008).	Tainan County Government started to accept individual application from Siraya persons who would like to have their indigenous identity registered.
2009	(1) 3 rd Musuhapa Summer Camp (July) (2) TPSCA hosted the first Siraya Language Teacher-training Seminar (August) (3) With the support of Tainan Government, TPSCA started offering Siraya Mother Tongue classes in four public (elementary) schools. (September) (4) TPSCA’s Chun Huang presented <i>Language revitalization and identity politics: Siraya in Taiwan</i> in the 1 st ICLDC.	(1) On January 8, TPSCA’s chair, Uma Talava, was appointed by Tainan Government as the Director of Siraya Aboriginal Affairs Committee. (2) TPSCA founded Tainan Siraya Mountain Village Co. It is a co-opt store that produces and sells local Siraya products. (3) TPSCA joined other Pepo groups in hosting a public hearing in Legislature Yuan, demanding official recognition of their indigenous status. (4) TPSCA started a “10,000 People for Pepo” petition on the internet. (5) The first meeting of a non-governmental National Pepo Indigenous Committee was held in Tainan. The committee decided to organize a street protest for Pepo rights. TPSCA’s Ban Chen-hiong was elected as the event’s commander and Uma Talavan the coordinator. (6) Sponsored by Tainan Government, TPSCA hosted “Starlight – Green Valley Music Festival.” (7) On April 14, Council of Indigenous Peoples (under central government) issued a letter stating that Tainan Government’s registration of Siraya persons was illegal. On April 20, Minister of Interior ordered Tainan Government to remove all Siraya registration

		<p>from its computer system. Tainan Siraya protested.</p> <p>(8) On May 2, TPSCA and the Siraya Ally, joined by other Pepo groups, hosted a street protest in front of the Presidential House in Taipei. More than 5,000 people participated.</p> <p>(9) Minister of Interior, following CIP's recommendation, removed all Siraya registration in the computer system. TPSCA's Uma Talavan, accompanied by Hsiao Ai-lian from the Kaxabu People, sat in front of CIP in a silent protest. To support Uma and Hsiao, a group of Pepo people lit firecrackers in front of CIP on June 24. CIP called the action "unacceptable" and the protestors "beggars." The Pepo demanded an apology by CIP but heard no response.</p> <p>(10) Tainan Government announced that it would reinstate the Siraya registration on paper while continuously accepting new applications.</p> <p>(11) On July 17, the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan announced its official recognition of Siraya as an indigenous people.</p> <p>(12) On July 24, CIP Chair Chang Jen-hsiang ordered civic offices in Tainan to discontinue Siraya registration immediately. On Aug 25, Tainan Magistrate Su Huan-chih instructed the civic offices to ignore CIP's order. Su then instructed Tainan Government's departmental directors, including Uma Talavan, to compile an official appeal for constitutional interpretations.</p>
2010	<p>(1) 4th Musuhapa Summer Camp</p> <p>(2) several sessions of Siraya Teacher-training Seminar</p> <p>(3) TPSCA's Language Team wrote and illustrated a series of Siraya storybooks, published by Tainan Government as <i>Sulat Ki Su KaMaka-Siraya</i> (Macapili et al. 2010), which later won a National Publication award in Taiwan.</p>	<p>(1) On Feb 2., Tainan Government's appeal to constitutional interpretation was officially sent to the Justices of Constitutional Court.</p> <p>(2) High Administrative Court, Tainan Branch, agreed to review the qualification of Uma Talavan's enrollment into the indigenous section of Tainan Parliament Election. After 3 court sessions, Uma was disqualified.</p> <p>(3) On May 5, a few days after the 2009 Pepo Protest, United Nations' Human Rights Committee started reviewing a case against the Taiwan Government prepared by TPSCA and other Pepo groups.</p> <p>(4) July 12 to 21: TPSCA's Uma Talavan, representing Siraya, and Jason Pan, representing Bazeh, were invited to UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of</p>

		<p>Indigenous Peoples in Geneva.</p> <p>(5) In July, Tainan Government presented a petition for appeal to CIP, demanding official recognition of the indigenous status of Siraya. In the following months, CIP had showed no interest in the appeal.</p> <p>(6) On Nov 23, TPSCA's Uma Talavan, representing 1,500 Siraya individuals who signed, pressed a complaint against CIP to Taipei High Administrative Court on the case of Siraya registration. Tainan Government offered to pay for the expense of the lawsuit.</p>
2011	<p>(1) 5th Musuhapa Summer Camp/ Teacher-training Camp</p> <p>(2) several sessions of Siraya Teacher-training seminar</p> <p>(3) TPSCA's Chun Huang, Edgar Macapili, and Uma Talavan co-authored <i>Creating a Voice for a Sleeping Language: Onini of Siraya</i> and submitted a proposal to the 2nd ICLDC. The paper was accepted but the co-authors had to withdraw from the conference due to lack of travel funds.</p> <p>(4) A Facebook group <i>Tamamatagisu Ka Maka-Siraya</i> was formed so that learners of Siraya can practice and ask questions.</p> <p>(5) This year TPSCA also lobbied for including Siraya Mother Tongue classes into the curricula of more public schools.</p>	<p>(1) The Siraya vs. CIP case continued. Many TPSCA members had attended the court sessions. On July 21, Taipei High Administrative Court rendered a judgment of nonsuit against the Siraya plaintiff.</p> <p>(2) Gold Bough Theatre, a local/localist performing troupe in Taiwan, wrote a play <i>Pirates and Formosa</i> telling the story of 17th century Taiwan. The play not only included Siraya characters but also lines in Siraya language, which was prepared by Shi Chao-Kai, a member of TPSCA's Language Team.</p>
2012	<p>(1) On World Mother Language Day, TPSCA announced the publication of five audio CDs to accompany the storybook series (Macapili et al. 2010). The audio series - <i>CD Ki Su Ka Maka-Siraya 1-5</i> (Macapili et al. 2011) – was produced by TPSCA and published by Tainan Government.</p> <p>(2) Tainan Government and TPSCA co-hosted a Symposium of Siraya Language and Grammar Book Presentation. Dr. Karl Alexander Adelaar was the invited speaker, who also presented copies of his monograph (Adelaar 2011) to TPSCA. Dr. Chun Huang served as the interpreter in Adelaar's talk.</p> <p>(3) Sponsored by Tainan Government, Tainan Indigenous School was embarked. TPSCA's Edgar Macapili and Shi Chao-kai taught multiple sessions of "Siraya Teacher-training Seminar" and "Siraya Workshop: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing."</p>	<p>(1) Tainan Government agreed to include Siraya Mother Tongue classes into the "elective" curricula of Tainan's public schools (elementary and middle schools – age 6 to age 15).</p> <p>(2) Onini, the music performance group from TPSCA, had officially performed on over 100 occasions.</p> <p>(3) TPSCA's Chair Uma Talavan was invited to give talks on Siraya reclamation at National Tsing Hua University's Graduate Program of Linguistics and at National Kaohsiung Normal University's Graduate Institute of Taiwan History, Culture, and Languages.</p>

2013	<p>(1) Siraya Sunday School at Kaopi Church, taught by students of TPSCA.</p> <p>(2) 3rd ICLDC</p> <p>(3) Siraya on the Internet: a collaboration project of TPSCA, Dr. Chun Huang at the University of Guam, and Dr. Oliver Streiter at the National University of Kaohsiung, to build an online database/ language-learning website of Siraya.</p> <p>(4) Continued plans to produce more Siraya-learning materials for public schools, to host Siraya language seminars for teachers and researchers, and to found a local Siraya School that would foster language use in the native communities as well as at home.</p>	
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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Heritage Linguistics

Heritage linguistics is defined as the scientific study of a language carried out by a person who claims the language as their heritage. The heritage linguist may have grown up hearing the language, but they do not speak it natively (Crippen, 2009). In other words, the linguist is a L2 speaker. Heritage linguistics is further distinguished from *indigenous linguistics*, where the linguist is a L1 speaker of the language they study and hence can often rely on their “native speakers’ intuition” when conducting research (ibid). A heritage linguist cannot produce their own linguistic documentation; they must gather data from other sources (e.g., the remaining L1 speakers and/or heritage texts). A heritage linguist is therefore a language learner as well as a linguistic expert, and, quite commonly, is often (asked by the community to be) also a language teacher.

Heritage linguistics often involves *language endangerment*, a phenomenon that is common in today’s world, thanks to globalism (e.g., the dominance of popular world languages such as English and Mandarin Chinese) as well as nationalism (e.g., the monolingual language policies). The endangered language may be a localized immigrant variety (e.g., Quebecois French), but more often it is an indigenous minority language. Such a language can be found in the third world, in a developing country, or in a first-world country. A sub-category of heritage linguistics is hence *ancestral linguistics*, where the heritage language the L2 linguist studies does not have any native speakers anymore. It is sleeping, or dormant. Huang, one of the co-authors of this paper and the only linguist in the group, is a heritage linguist studying his ancestral language, Siraya, which is an indigenous language of Taiwan last spoken natively a century ago. Another example of an ancestral, heritage linguistic study that comes to mind is the revitalization of Miami (e.g., Leonard, 2008 and 2009).

Advantages and disadvantages of heritage linguistics

Possible advantages of a heritage linguist include (1) doing “homework” instead of fieldwork and (2) the assumption of a “cultural insider” status (Crippen 2009). While a traditional (non-heritage) documentary linguist often needs to spend a considerable time adjusting to the unfamiliar natural environment and social customs of their fieldwork site, a heritage linguist is just doing homework in familiar surroundings. In addition, a (good) traditional linguist must also make a tremendous effort to gain trust from the locals, whereas a heritage linguist can usually assume that such trust has already existed. As an insider, or a native member of the

community, the heritage linguist may gain access to certain sociocultural events that may never be open to an outsider. These include not just sacred ceremonies but also gossips about internal politics, for example.

The heritage linguist hence must, willingly or unwillingly, take up more responsibilities towards their native community: They may be requested to do things they did not set up to do or want to do, and they may assume roles they did not intend to assume. As Crippen (2009) points out, “while at home, ‘real life’ may interfere with research; consultant patience... may be lower; restricted data may not be publishable;” the heritage linguist “may become a political proxy for nonlinguistic issues, may be blamed for language policy failures, and may be expected to be a language teacher and not a researcher.” The expert role the heritage linguist assumes may also alienate them from their peer group.

Still, it must be pointed out that personal differences exist and individual situations may vary. Some of the issues identified as “problems” of heritage linguistics by Crippen may not be perceived as such by other fellow heritage linguists. Huang, for example, enjoys being a language teacher and does not mind participating in political events; he simply wishes that he had more time and energy left for researching on language proper. Furthermore, sociolinguistic conditions in the global context contribute to another difference as well: while a heritage linguist like Crippen, who is a Tlingit person and a Native American, may often need to translate his L2 heritage language to and from his L1 English, a heritage linguist like Huang, who is from a non-English-speaking country, has to do extra work. Huang is not only frequently tasked with translating/interpreting his heritage L2 Siraya to and from Taiwanese Southern Min (the spoken L1 of many modern-day Sirayas) and Mandarin Chinese (the written L1 for all and a second spoken L1 for many), but he also finds himself translating/interpreting all of the above (heritage L2 and two L1s) to and from his non-heritage L2 English, the necessary lingua franca of academia⁸.

2.2. Language Activism

Another “problem” of heritage linguistics so honestly pointed out by Crippen (2009) is the fact that “a heritage linguist is automatically assumed to want to be involved in language revitalization,” but the reality is that heritage linguists are not all interested in revitalization. However, “not having an interest in active revitalization may be offensive to other community members.” This observation leads us to our next topic: language activism.

Language Activism was also first proposed in ICLDC 2009, by Florey et al. (2009), as central component of “new linguistics,” which is “a more participatory and politicized linguistics... characterized by profound changes to ethics, methods and practice,... within which the language rights movement and international conventions and declarations have played a key role in highlighting and setting out the rights of indigenous peoples to control intellectual property and strategies and actions vis-à-vis minority languages.” It serves as a response to the common but artificial division between “linguist” and “language activist.” The “linguist,” often a non-indigenous outsider formally trained in academia, is set in contrast against the “language activist,” an indigenous community member who has never received formal linguistic training. Such a division then leads to the assumption that only the linguist is capable of language documentation and description, while the language activist is concerned only with the non-scientific activities such as language revitalization and maintenance. In plain, non-academic discourse: the linguist does the *real* work, while the language activist takes

⁸ For example, for an event took place in Tainan, Taiwan in 2012, Huang served as an interpreter for Dr. A. K. Adelaar, who presented his monograph on Siraya (Adelaar 2011) to the local community. The event was an apparent success and the community members liked Adelaar’s work so much that they later requested that Huang take on the translation of Adelaar (2011) and facilitate its publication.

on the dirty job. The linguist is not (obliged) to share their professional knowledge and intellectual products with the community activists since “they would not understand anyway;” the linguist need not, or *should not*, participate in revitalization efforts because these are often too political and “non-scientific.” Such ideas are all too real: the co-authors of this paper, for example, have heard from a graduate student in one of our language camps that her linguistic advisor had once told her, “when you go to the village (for fieldwork), the people will ask you to help with many things. Just ignore them. You are there to do research. Get the data and come back.” Such ideas are not often confronted or discussed openly, however, probably because those of us who are in academia are too afraid: For example, we did not name the linguist and his affiliation in the story above because our Author 1 is currently working in academia; he chooses to observe the ethical code of his profession, but at what expense?

The division between “linguist/ linguistic work” and “language activist/ activism” must be challenged because, first of all, as shown in our earlier discussion, there are nowadays more and more heritage linguists who are themselves community members and who have received rigid academic training (even though they may not all be interested in activist endeavors), and secondly, as Florey et al. (2009) point out: “(1) Language documentation... bear a commitment to the maintenance of linguistic diversity; (2) Language activism is a necessary and intrinsic component of language documentation and conservation; (3) Activism is the first step in building efforts towards documentation and conservation.” Or, again, in plain, non-academic discourse: If a linguist does not make an effort to ensure the survival of a speech community, to the extent that the language of the community is eventually lost, then what is the linguist going to study next? The linguist can move on to the next language in another community. Sure. But if nothing changes, the next language may soon disappear, too.

In fact, linguists, and academics in general, all have a reputation in communities. For example, there have been many scholars and/or graduate students who have visited our Siraya community in the last decade. Our people know who they are. We know who among these academic people have stayed with us, and who have left us. We know who are sincere and have shown persistent interest in everything we do and who are concerned with their own careers only. We know whom we can consider “friends” and whom, “trouble-makers.” We work with our friends and we ignore, and sometimes despise, the trouble-makers. In fact, we do not just know those with whom we have been in touch; we know of others as well because our friends in other indigenous communities (e.g., the Pazeh, the Kaxabu, the Paiwan, etc.) would tell us about them. All this is only obvious.

In sum, although many in the general society as well as in academia still make a distinction between the outsider linguist and the insider language activist, the line between them is not absolute. In actuality, any community insider (linguist or not) may choose to distance themselves from the activists, and any (outsider or insider) linguist may choose to “focus energetic action towards preserving and promoting linguistic diversity” and combine “both language documentation and conservation efforts” (Florey et al. 2009).

3. THE CO-AUTHORS’ ACCOUNTS

In this section, each of the co-authors would give a first-person narrative on their personal, activist involvement in reclaiming the Siraya language, culture, and identity. Since Huang has an additional affiliation with the academia, he would also remark on heritage linguistics. Macapili and Talavan would then provide their reflections and/or expectations on Huang’s role as a Siraya heritage linguist.

3.1. Jimmy Huang's (Author 1) Account

I did not know I was an indigenous person, let alone a Siraya person, until the summer of 2005. I was pursuing my Ph.D. degree in linguistics at the University of Florida, and I went home to Taiwan that summer just for the break. During a trip around Taiwan with my parents and my sister, we encountered a “Siraya Exhibition” in an indigenous museum, when we saw all the familiar tools (domestic, fishing, and farming) we had had at home stored in a glass cabinet, labeled as “the Siraya tools;” there were ceremonial items, too, used in the indigenous Alid religion, with which my father was familiar. Before, Siraya had never attracted any public attention. It only started to become visible mainly because of Uma Tavalan and her same-generation activists’ effort; they were all about 10 years older than me and had become aware of their Siraya heritage in the late 1990s.

Two years later, in the summer of 2007, I went back to Taiwan again, and this time for my first fieldwork. I was doing a sociolinguistic project for my dissertation that had the whole population of Taiwan as the scope: I conducted ethnographic interviews with individuals from various ethnolinguistic backgrounds, such as Mandarin, Southern Min, Hakka, Paiwan, and Sakizaya. I was to include only one interview with a Siraya person, Uma, with whom I had established contact through emails. In our email exchanges, Uma had also told me that TPSCA was to host a (Musuhapa) Siraya language camp in July. I was very curious and wondered how a language announced “extinct” by the linguists could still be taught? What were the materials TPSCA used? And who was going to teach it? So I enrolled in the summer camp and learned Siraya from Edgar. I still remember how moved I was when I saw, in the first day of the summer camp, a group of native children singing in Siraya. The experience made me re-think the (in)appropriateness of labeling a language, and thus a culture as well as a whole group of people, as extinct, or dead. After the summer camp, I sat down with Uma and Edgar and did the interview. During the interview, they invited me to join TPSCA and helped them with language revitalization. Of course I said yes. I felt honored and a strong sense of mission. That summer I received a grant from the Taiwanese Foundation of Boston for my sociolinguistic research.

Late 2007, I changed the scope of my Ph.D. research from Taiwan’s multiple ethnolinguistic groups to Siraya focus. My committee members supported my decision; they knew how important it was for me to re-connect and re-learn my own heritage. The revised project was still sociolinguistics in nature, for it examined the issue of identity reclamation, but it was also anthropological linguistics because I was to be a participant of the language revitalization effort as well. While in Florida, I started to study the Siraya language materials Edgar had designed, along with academic papers published by Adelaar and others.

In the summer of 2008, I was lucky to again receive a research grant, this time from the Foundation for Endangered Languages, so that I could afford another round-trip ticket to Taiwan. I participated the 2nd Musuhapa summer camp. I was no longer a student. I taught a few Siraya language lessons alongside Edgar. I also used the grant money to help TPSCA buy a computer and some sound-editing software. Now TPSCA would have a storage space for our language materials and Edgar could use the software to make more Siraya music. We also used the computer to work on a Siraya-English-Chinese trilingual dictionary, which Edgar himself had started a few years ago. The dictionary was published the end of the year (Macapili 2008). Edgar was the main author, I helped with editing, proof-reading, and translation, and some other volunteers, especially Chaokai Shi, a graduate student of linguistics from the Southern-Min-speaking Han ethnic group, took a big part in the project as well. During that summer, Uma, Edgar, a TPSCA volunteer Peichen Li, and I also conducted our own fieldwork to the east coast of Taiwan. We not only visited a few villages of other indigenous groups that had had official status and hence government grants for their community projects, but we also

visited a Siraya rememberer, Wanjin Pan, in an immigrant Siraya village in Hualien. We chatted with Pan and collected a Siraya word lists from him.

2009 was a big year for TPSCA, for the Siraya, and for the unrecognized Pepo (Low-land) Indigenous peoples as a whole. As summarized in Section 1, all these groups joined force to demand official recognition of our peoples publicly as a reaction to the central government's denial of our identity. Unfortunately, due to lack of financial aid and the fact that I was trying to finish writing my dissertation, I was unable to participate most of the sociopolitical events. Nevertheless, I was able to do my "homework" (instead of fieldwork) in Florida: I helped prepare an English petition for Siraya and Pepo recognition online, and I helped share an edited video documentary of the May 2 Protest on the internet, in which Uma and Edgar's daughter, Eucharis, gave a public speech in Siraya to thousands of street protesters in front of Taiwan's Presidential House in Taipei, which was at least 5 hours away by car from the Siraya hometown in Tainan. This year I also presented my paper *Language revitalization and identity politics: Siraya in Taiwan* in the first ICLDC conference (with travel grant from school and from the Tybel Spivack Scholarship Fund for Anthropological Linguistics). It was overall a great experience: I met and became friends with some other heritage linguists and language activists, and I received positive feedback for my research. However, I also met a linguist from Taiwan who denounced the Siraya rememberers and said that what they thought they remembered was not Siraya at all.

In May 2010 I was awarded Ph.D. in linguistics. A few months later, my friend Dr. Malay, who is a marine biologist and a Filipino person, graduated. We were married in Florida. We needed jobs and had been looking for places where both of us could work as professional academics. I sent out at least 30 applications to schools in the states as well as in Taiwan but heard no reply. I was young. I knew that I could probably find a job more easily had I applied for Mandarin-teaching positions in the US, which were plenty because Mandarin was becoming very popular, since I had had years of experience as a teaching assistant. But I did not apply for any because it felt wrong to me: after all, the Mandarin policy in Taiwan and Chinese nationalism were/are the main reasons why the Siraya people have yet to receive an official status and the Siraya language went sleeping. So I only applied for anthropological linguistic positions. It turned out that I was probably not "competitive" enough because of my ethnolinguistic background and my Taiwan-Siraya focus: a few anthropological linguist friends of mine, some Caucasian and some Native American, got the jobs. I did not mind, really. I truly believed that Native American heritage linguists should teach in the states. As far as the academic jobs in Taiwan are concerned, I just could not break the Han-Chinese culture of *guanxi*, or connection: while many schools would still post job advertisements when there was an opening, they did it mainly because it was required. The unsaid rule, or "convention," in Taiwan (and probably in many other parts of Asia) is that a teacher or a program would "hold a position" for their former students, who might have studied with them as undergraduate or a master's students and then went on to receive a Ph.D. from abroad; then they would come back to Taiwan and teach in their alma mater. I had not studied linguistics in Taiwan; I had no *guanxi* there. In fact, there was one position in Taiwan for which I almost had had an advantage. The school was looking for an indigenous person to teach indigenous subjects. But it turned out that I was not really qualified because Siraya was not officially an indigenous people. The reason did not satisfy me, for I felt that Siraya's indigenous status was unfairly stripped away from my people. Still, I convinced myself that it would not be a bad result as long as another indigenous person filled that position; Taiwan needed more heritage researchers.

Anyway, in the end my wife and I were lucky enough to both find a 1-year postdoc position in Taiwan. I was to work on a corpus-based project that digitally documented Taiwan's tombstones⁹ and she on a

⁹ <http://thakbong.dyndns.tv/>

biodiversity project. Both of our contracts started in Fall 2010, and so we had no honeymoon after our wedding. We moved back to my home country right away.

The year between August 1, 2010 and July 31, 2011 was great for me. Because my boss for the postdoc project, Dr. Oliver Streiter of the National University of Kaohsiung, gave me much leeway doing whatever I wanted to do so long as I finished all the tomb-related tasks, I was able to work with my Siraya friends and family. I was able to serve as a Siraya language instructor in the 2010 and 2011 summer camps and in some teacher-training seminars. Also, for the first time, I was physically present in the political events pertaining to Siraya reclamation: I was in many street demonstrations and I attended many of the court hearings, together with Uma and other members of TPSCA. None of these experiences have yielded any academic publication; I was there for my friends, not to collect data or for my academic career. I paid most of the needed expenses for (mainly transportation) out of my own pocket. My postdoc salary was spent on my participation in Siraya activism. I saved very little, but I felt happy and active. Also in 2011, I submitted a proposal to the 2nd ICLDC conference and invited Edgar and Uma as my co-authors. I hoped to bring them there so that the academics in the conference can hear directly from the “community people,” of whom the academics had talked about so much. Our proposal was accepted, but we had received no travel grant. We were all too poor, and we had to turn down the conference invitation.

The year in Taiwan ended fast. The postdoc contracts ended and so my wife and I needed to look for jobs again. We applied for positions in Taiwan and in the first-world countries again; and again we heard no result. Then we traveled to my wife’s home country, the Philippines, to visit schools there. Soon enough, we received offers to assistant professor positions from two top Filipino universities; and we chose the one in Manila, to be close to my wife’s family. We were ready to move again. Uma was sad, Edgar was sad, and I was sad. I knew that they had hoped for many years that I would come back to Taiwan to take over the main responsibility for Siraya language revitalization so that they could focus on their other passions (especially, music) and on their family. I felt sorry but I had no other options.

The workload was heavy in the school in the Philippines. In each of the two terms I had worked there, from August 2011 to May 2012, I taught 4 classes, each of which had about 40 enrolled students. Moreover, in the 8 classes I had taught, only one was a linguistic course. All others were English composition classes. And I was paid as much as I had been paid as a graduate teaching assistant in Florida. I mentioned all these not to complain, but simply to point out the inequality in global economy. I have learned that we could never expect an academic in the third world to produce as much and as quickly as their colleagues in the first or second worlds. In my 9 months working in the Philippines, I only taught. I had no publication and I could do no research. My involvement with Siraya was reduced to minimum. I was only able to help proofread some of the language-teaching materials in *Ki Su Ka Maka-Siraya 1-5* (Macapili et al. 2011) and occasionally answer a few questions from the teacher students who joined the facebook discussion group *Tamamatagisu Ka Maka-Siraya*. My wife faced similar difficulties in her position. And our health was not great because of the workload and the heavy pollution in the city. So we resigned. I was then again lucky enough to find my current job, a linguistic position at the University of Guam, and I have been working on Guam since August 2012. My wife, however, ran out of luck this time. Despite being a capable Ph.D. holder, she had a stamp on her US visa that reads “dependent.” Currently she is not allowed to work in any paid position.

Guam has been nice for me so far. Although my main duty in this position is still teaching, now I have some load allocation for research. Also, on Guam I can be involved with Chamorro revitalization: Chamorro is an Austronesian native tongue like Siraya, and so I am able to learn from the Chamorro experiences and share these experiences with my Siraya friends and family. The difference is that, when it comes to Chamorro, I am

now an outsider linguist. Hence I must gain trust from my Chamorro friends, and my involvement with Chamorro politics would be quite different from my involvement with Siraya, which is and will always remain my own heritage.

3.2. Edgar Macapili's (Author 2) Account

My Siraya encounter

I am a Filipino composer, choral conductor and songwriter. I am also a church music lecturer at the Tainan Theological College, Taiwan. Moreover, I received theological training to become a minister before my formal training in classical music. My acquaintance of Siraya started about 20 years ago when I got married to Ms. Uma Talavan, a Taiwanese Sirayan who works as the Chair Person of the Tainan Pepo Siraya Culture Association (TPSCA). Since I am a professional singer what best way to introduce to you about my knowledge of the Siraya people and its language by sharing a short Siraya song first. This song is a story about the predicament not only of the Siraya people but all indigenous people in the world that conformed into the more dominant culture after being colonized.

The title is 'Pasubug-a Akey. It means, 'Let Eagle Fly':

Wagi gapit (Sunrise)

Mukun ki su (Word to speak)

Mitatug ki tanamsing (Faith to believe)

Rig mararig (Sense to feel)

Manino ki kawagan (Life is freedom)

Mariyang ki kawagan (Life is full)

Wagi matub (Sunset)

Ref.

Pasubug-a Akey (Let eagle fly)

Pasawvulum Akey (Let eagle soar)

Pasubug-a Akey (Let eagle fly)

Pasawvulum Akey (Let eagle soar)

Wagi gapit (Sunrise)

Nimukwa ta raruma (Others came)

Nimukun ta neni ki su (Words they speak)

Niamag (apa) ki tanamsing (Faith they believe)

Niirang ki nanang (Name their pride)

Manino ki kawagan (Life is freedom)

Mariyang ki kawagan (Life is full)

Wagi matub (Sunset)

(Repeat ref.)

Wagi gapit (Sunrise)

Awsu mukun ki su (Speak no word)

Nisumala ki tamamsing (Faith is gone)

Nanang apa ka baa (Name on loan)
Rig ka Panini (Other (altered) sense)
Asi manino ki kawagan (Life isn't freedom)
Asi mariyang ki kawagan (Life isn't full)
Wagi matub (Sunset)
(Repeat ref.)

Wagi gapit (Sunrise)
Gapita ka pasusua (Rise and speak)
Taduga ki tanamsing (Revive hope/faith)
Pakulangag-a ki nanang (Cry out name)
Pakavahaw ki rig (Renew senses)
Manino ki kawagan (Life is freedom)
Mariyang ki kawagan (Life is full)
Wagi matub (Sunset)

My role in Siraya revitalization movement

It is told that almost 200 hundred years now Siraya language was ceased to be spoken. It is of course implicit that during the early Japanese occupation (between 1885 to 1945) in Taiwan, Siraya was still spoken sporadically. From this period until early 1997, seemingly, Siraya language might be almost gone, unheard and forgotten. The Chinese migration over Taiwan, then Formosa, took its toll on almost all indigenous languages and cultures in Taiwan. Even greater destructive effect on the plain aborigines, loosing their unique names and identity as a peculiar people of which among these groups is the Siraya tribe. For Siraya, fortunately, the much earlier foreign occupation, the 17th Dutch colonization left priceless and helpful documents of Siraya language; a Bible Gospel Siraya translation and other religious materials, accounts of its culture and land deeds. These are now the basis of Siraya language and culture revitalization. TPSCA, an NGO established more than a decade ago tries to help revive its language and culture using the above-mentioned documents. As a volunteer, I work with TPSCA as a music and language consultant for more than a decade now. With the aid of my Austronesian language knowledge, as I speak fluent Bisaya, Tagalog and Chavacano among others, in an unconventional manner and with that capacity I begin deciphering and analyzing some of these documents that appear to have similarity with my own mother Filipino tongues. And, although unconventional, surprisingly, this knowledge helped to work wonders! Sooner, as a good Siraya son-in-law would do with formal musical training, I try to help Siraya language revitalization program by composing songs, setting music with simple Siraya text. Likewise, helping to write and teach linguistic materials and lessons. My wife and I started to teach these songs to Siraya kids in our community by emulating how the kids learn their first English nursery rhymes, which, in a way is very effective. Gradually, we hold several Siraya language workshops and training camps. After years of hard work, kids are now growing up with strong sense of Siraya identity and awareness of the Siraya culture and also are able to sing, play Siraya traditional instrument and speak Siraya.

Aspiration (Siraya University)

When we had our first Siraya cultural presentation “The Other Window of Pepo” in 1997, while neighboring churches with Siraya communities were supportive, other sectors in society were quite hesitant to rally behind our movement. The academics in linguistics were suspicious and even ridiculed, for how can a

“dead language” be revived. Still other thought that we were just having some kind of “cultural show”. Today, I wish to assure you that, Siraya as a language is written both in academic paper and in poetry, sang as traditional and/or folksongs, and in more complicated classical choral music settings. Likewise we can listen to Siraya spoken by children and adults. Outside our community, we also made considerable impact on the political, social and educational spectrum. Today, through the help and approval of the Greater Tainan City Government, it is now a policy to teach Siraya language in elementary schools where there are known Siraya communities. We anticipate to having wholesome continuous working partnership with the academics in linguistics. And indeed, some significant people in linguistics, Dr. Jimmy Chuan Huang, Dr. Alexander Adelaar, to mention a few, now join to support us. Dr. Jimmy Huang, himself a Siraya, is helping us with many of our documentation projects, lesson plans and yearly linguistic camps. We even established a Facebook group called ‘Tamagisu ka MakaSiraya’, just so that this language is persistently used a medium of communication just like any other ‘normal’ languages. In our church we see to it that it is part of our language education and awareness by learning a couple of new vocabularies and common phrases and reviewing them every Sunday. While this learning process is actively done I am still inclined to believe that this is not enough to hasten the rehabilitation of Siraya language. Conversely, to completely awaken Siraya language, proper financial support of the national government and private sectors is necessary to support in forming a more conventional educational institution. If this is so, a core of scholars that learn, study, and immerse themselves into the Siraya language must be created. It is not at all bad if we wish to have Siraya University as our ultimate goal where Siraya language and culture are prerequisite courses; where our youngsters, youths and adults can take part of the cultural rehabilitation and at the same time immerse themselves into their cultural heritage; where our doctorates with Siraya ancestries in linguistics, history, sciences and other liberal arts can take part by teaching, managing and establishing in this great institution in years to come.

3.3. Uma Talavan’s (Author 3) Account

When do you know about Siraya?

What is your role in TPSCA

Hopes and expectations(towards Jimmy, and then towards the Siraya movement and/or Pepo movement in general)

4. DISCUSSION: HERITAGE LANGUAGE ACTIVISM IN LOCAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS

The co-authors of this paper acknowledge that while some heritage linguists may prefer a non-activist involvement with their native community so that they could focus on apolitical language research (if such a thing truly existed), most heritage linguists would naturally choose to actively participate in the maintenance and/or revitalization of their languages. Although common, their motivation need not be ethically or morally driven (e.g., keeping one’s language alive is not only “good” but also “right”). The simple fact is that if their heritage language is lost, they will not be able to do any heritage linguistics. If they still wish to be an academic linguist, they can study a language that is not their own and become an outsider researcher, but then they will have to face a different set of challenges that they may have never experienced before. As outsiders, they may find themselves even less obliged to stay with the community with which they work: they may feel freer to “quit,” or to leave their project. It thus follows that the best bet for a community to ensure the continuation of its language, in addition to community involvement and actual language use, seems to be the cultivation of its own heritage linguists.

However, it must be pointed out that cultivating a heritage linguist is not an easy task because, as pointed out earlier, heritage linguistics mostly concerns minority, indigenous languages. The minority groups in a country are often culturally and socioeconomically underprivileged, and so higher education cannot be taken for granted. Take Siraya for example: Author 1 remains the only academically trained Siraya person in the whole world with a linguistics Ph.D., and many Siraya youngsters, who are no less intelligent than their non-Siraya or non-indigenous cohorts in high school, do not have the money or the opportunity to study in a prestigious university, or to go to college at all. A lot of them, when younger, were excellent students of their heritage language, and many of them had a dream to stay in their village and help revive their heritage. But the social and financial pressure has driven many of them away: they have become immigrants in large cities and now only come back to the village a few times in a year. Even Author 1 has to work outside of his home country as a college professor such that he could not participate in Siraya reclamation as much as he once wished he would. All this shows that heritage language activism cannot be achieved simply by ethical persuasion; the sociopolitical factors – the harsh reality – must be taken into account.

Moreover, heritage languages are not all equal: Some languages have thousands of speakers, some have hundreds of speakers, some have tens or below ten, and some, no native speaker at all; some languages have an official status, but some do not. The academia makes such a distinction between “language documentation” of those languages that have speakers, and “language revitalization” (or reclamation) of those sleeping or dormant ones, such as Siraya. The distinction has led to inequality in funding: even though language conservation in general has gained more academic attention in recent years, most funding agencies today show a preference (and have made such a preference public) to documentation projects over revitalization projects. The government makes a distinction as well: a language without an official status, such as Siraya, is often (but not always) disqualified for governmental support. In other words, the resources are discriminatory: Siraya never chose to be dormant or unofficial; it just is. But instead of being remedied, the inherited inequality is further reinforced by institutionalized inequality.

The heritage linguists are not all equal, either. As Author 1 has studied in the US and worked as an academic in Taiwan, the Philippines, and in the United States island territory of Guam, he strongly feels the socioeconomic inequality on a global scale. As mentioned in Author 1’s personal account, his monthly salary as an assistant professor in a private university in the Philippines was as much as his monthly income as a graduate assistant in Florida (roughly 1,000 USD)¹⁰. And that is in fact the highest pay for such a position in the Philippines. Now imagine his students there: most of them are Filipino but there are also some from Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and provinces of China. They will hopefully graduate with a master’s or doctoral degree in linguistics, but only few of them will get into the same position and receive the same pay as their professor. As most of them will likely work in a third-world or developing country, even if they wish to work on their heritage languages (and many do), they may not be supported financially and institutionally. Governments of the third-world and developing countries either would not or could not fund heritage linguistic projects, and they often demand that their professors with a degree from abroad teach popular global languages such as English and Mandarin Chinese. If the much heavier teaching load than their first- and second-world colleges does not deter them from conducting heritage research, these third-world heritage linguists would need to compete against these first- and second-world colleges in seeking funds from (often first-world) agencies. With a degree from a university in the Philippines, even though a good one, they are in a great disadvantage. The competition is not fair. Anyone who refuses to acknowledge such unfairness would be blind, or plainly ignorant. One may argue that the living expense in the third- or developing worlds is also lower and so the third-world

¹⁰ And the salary on Guam is generally lower than in any of the United States.

(heritage) linguists can still get by. But that would mean that they shall never participate in high-quality international academic events, such as this conference, and never get a chance to exchange ideas with their more affluent colleges because round-trip tickets to Hawaii may cost more than their one-month salary.

The authors believe that none of the issues discussed here is new. They have existed for a long time. They require no scholarly jargon (such as “hegemony,” “power struggle,” etc.) to be fully understood; the only requirement is honesty as well as true understanding. The authors thus encourage those in our audience that are from the relatively affluent countries to think more thoroughly for their third-, developing-world, and minority students and colleagues: they may at least inform those of their students, who aspire to partake heritage language activism, of the severe challenges after graduation so that the students can have a full evaluation before making career decisions; they may also make a better effort to ensure fair distribution of resources when engaging in a collaboration project in the less fortunate parts of the world.

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